This handbook is neither a contract nor an offer of a contract. The material contained herein is not intended to substitute for or otherwise modify the regulations that are contained in the current Northcentral University Catalog or any other official documents. This handbook was designed to document requirements specific to the Marriage and Family Therapy degree programs. The University reserves the right to change any provision or requirement, including fees, at any time with or without notice. The University further reserves the right to require a student to withdraw from the University for cause at any time. Failure to read this handbook does not excuse students from the requirements and regulations described herein.

Northcentral University welcomes all qualified adult students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, veteran status, or disability. This applies to all Northcentral University policies, practices, or procedures involving applicants, students, faculty members, employees, and the public. Northcentral reserves the right to refuse admission to anyone the University believes does not meet Northcentral University academic standards or demonstrates actions or behaviors not aligned with Northcentral University policy.
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Dear Northcentral Marriage and Family Therapy Doctoral Student,

Welcome to Northcentral University’s Doctor of Philosophy in Marriage and Family Therapy (PhDMFT) program. We are pleased to welcome you as a student and colleague in the pursuit of knowledge in the field of MFT. The Northcentral University MFT Programs are one of only a handful of online graduate MFT training programs that exist today and our MAMFT and PhDMFT programs were the first such programs to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Our MFT programs have seen considerable growth within the past several years, particularly following receipt of COAMFTE accreditation. We developed this Program Handbook to assist you as you begin and progress through your studies. We wish you the best and look forward to your participation in, and contribution to, the PhDMFT Program at Northcentral University.

Sincerely,

Dr. Darren Adamson, LMFT
Chair, Department of Marriage and Family Sciences
dadamson@ncu.edu
(928) 771-6847

Introduction
This handbook has been prepared to serve as a guide for students enrolled in the PhDMFT program at Northcentral University. University-wide rules and regulations can be found in the Northcentral University Catalog. The policies of this handbook are consistent with university policies and are intended to supplement, not replace, university policies and procedures. In addition, the educational and training protocols of the program are designed to conform to the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) standards of training and practice, including the AAMFT Code of Ethics.

Please read this handbook carefully, as you are expected to know this information. If you have any questions, please contact the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences or the Director of the MFT Doctoral Programs (you can e-mail either of them at mfs@ncu.edu). This document will be revised periodically to reflect necessary programmatic changes that may occur due to changes in the profession, the University, or other relevant contexts. All policies, and any changes to these policies, shall be reviewed and approved by appropriate administrative personnel and will be communicated to students as needed.

The Profession of Marriage and Family Therapy
The profession began as a number of psychologists and psychiatrists began to see limitations in treating many mental health issues using treatment approaches focused on individuals. It became apparent to these women and men that treating whole families and combinations of family members (e.g., parents, couples) yielded positive results. From these initial observations and efforts, the field of marriage and family therapy (MFT) was born. The MFT field has now become a distinct mental health discipline with its own body of theory, research, clinical techniques, and
code of ethics. All fifty (50) states and the District of Columbia currently have active legislation that governs the practice of MFT. Marriage and family therapists diagnose and treat problems from a systemic perspective. They work with individuals, couples, families, and/or larger systems in a variety of contexts. The work of MFT focuses on interactional and relational processes and seeks to build on the clients’ strengths and resources. Marriage and family therapists help families address and change relationships and patterns of communication so those families can find reasonable solutions to problems for themselves. There are many models of practice in MFT, and individual practitioners may vary greatly in their methods and techniques of clinical work.

Program Policies and Procedures
For ease of access, we have organized the first portion of the handbook to map on to the eight eligibility criteria specified as required foundational aspects of a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE).

Criterion A: Program Identity as Educating Couple or Marriage and Family Therapists

Overview of the PhDMFT Program
The Doctor of Philosophy in Marriage and Family Therapy (PhDMFT) program at Northcentral University was designed to provide a high quality and rigorous education and training experience for students who wish to prepare for professional life as marriage and family therapists. A high standard of excellence is expected. In support of this, program faculty members are selected for their expertise and ability to support students and facilitate exceptional educational attainment. The program is focused on developing research capabilities, advanced skills, and personal and professional growth for effective contributions to the field of marriage and family therapy. The program offers advanced clinical education and training, research coursework and opportunities, and supervision training and experience. Graduates of the program will be prepared to carry out advanced clinical work and supervision and/or education and research in the field of marriage and family therapy.

There are eight specializations within the Doctor of Philosophy in Marriage and Family Therapy degree program. The program website provides further detail about each specialization. Click Here to learn more about each specialization below:

- Child and Adolescent Therapy
- Couple Therapy
- Culture, Diversity, and Social Justice in a Global Context
- Education and Supervision
- General Family Therapy
- Medical Family Therapy
- Systemic Leadership
- Therapy with Military Families
University Vision, Mission, and Values
Please visit the Northcentral University Catalog for our current Vision, Mission, and Values, which can be located here.

Department of Marriage and Family Sciences (SMFS) Mission, Vision, and Goals

Department Mission
The mission of the Northcentral University Department of Marriage and Family Sciences is to provide personalized educational opportunities to students throughout the world that will allow them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values integral to professional practice within the marriage and family sciences.

Department Vision
The vision of the Northcentral University Department of Marriage and Family Sciences is to unite a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students to improve the human condition through research and practice.

Department Goals
The Northcentral University Department of Marriage and Family Sciences promotes the development of:

- Expertise in discipline-specific models and theories
- Ethical professionals
- Commitment to affirm and advance diversity
- Research competency
- Practical skills that positively impact individuals, families, and communities

Program Mission
The mission of Northcentral’s PhDMFT Program is to prepare competent, ethical, culturally sensitive Marriage and Family Therapists. The program emphasizes a family systems perspective so that client processes, whether these clients are individuals, couples, or families, are conceptualized relationally and systemically. Faculty engage students in a one-on-one process that invites students to grow both professionally and personally through the development of critical thinking skills, information literacy, important clinical skills, an appreciation for and knowledge of research through the scholar-practitioner model, a valuing of diversity, and a lifelong commitment to learning and service.
Educational Outcomes: PhD Marriage and Family Therapy
The specific goals and related student learning outcomes of the MFTPhD program are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Knowledge Goal</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcome #1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The NCU PhD Program will prepare students to apply relational/systemic knowledge to positively impact individuals, families, and communities.</td>
<td>1. Students will cultivate relational/systemic innovations addressing contemporary issues in the field of marriage and family therapy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Practice Goal</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcome #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The NCU PhD Program will guide students in developing advanced relational/systemic clinical competence.</td>
<td>2. Students/graduates will develop expertise in an area of specialization related to the field of couple/marriage &amp; family therapy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Diversity Goal</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcome #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. The NCU PhD Program will demonstrate a clear commitment to diversity and social justice.</td>
<td>3. Students will cultivate competence in working with diverse populations in various contexts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Research Goal</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcome #4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. The NCU PhD Program will foster the development of scholar-practitioners in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy.</td>
<td>4. Students will create new knowledge in couple/marriage and family therapy through independent research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Ethics Goal</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcome #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. The NCU PhD Program will train students to practice as ethical professionals.</td>
<td>5. Students will appraise relational/systemic ethical behaviors in various settings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eligibility Criterion B: Faculty Identity as Marriage and Family Therapists
We currently have almost 20 fulltime faculty who teach in the PhDMFT Program, along with almost 30 part-time or adjunct faculty. All fulltime faculty were trained in COAMFTE accredited graduate programs, so they are familiar with the values of this approach to MFT education. NCU PhDMFT faculty members are AAMFT Clinical Member and Approved Supervisors or Supervisor Candidates. The vast majority are LMFTs and are currently providing clinical services. Information on the gender and race/ethnicity of current fulltime PhDMFT faculty are provided here. Core Faculty are distributed across the US in almost a dozen states.

Eligibility Criterion C: Program Leadership
The Director of MFT Doctoral Programs, Dr. Mark White, meets the following criteria:

- The Program Director has the qualifications enabling him to provide leadership for the advanced curriculum and application component consistent with the program’s mission.
- Dr. White is an AAMFT Approved Supervisor with supervision experience and training.
- He is qualified and vested with responsibility for oversight of the curriculum, clinical training
program, facilities, services, and the maintenance and enhancement of the program’s quality.

- The program is directed throughout the year (12 months).
- Dr. White is one of the core faculty.

**Eligibility Criterion D: Institutional Accreditation/Oversight**

Northcentral University is a WSCUC accredited institution. WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001, [www.wascsum.org](http://www.wascsum.org). WSCUC is recognized by the [U.S. Department of Education](https://www.ed.gov) and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

[https://www.ncu.edu/accreditations](https://www.ncu.edu/accreditations)
[https://www.wscuc.org/institutions/northcentral-university](https://www.wscuc.org/institutions/northcentral-university)

**Eligibility Criterion F: Accuracy and Program Transparency in Publications**

**Program mission**
The mission of the PhDMFT program is included above on p. 6.

**Program goals**
The goals of the PhDMFT program are included above on p. 7.

**Program outcomes**
The outcomes of the PhDMFT program are included above on p. 7.

**Student/graduate achievements**
The following table, which can be found towards the bottom of this page (just before the Available Specializations list) contains the COAMFTE Student Achievement Criteria Data for the NCU PhDMFT Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COAMFTE Student Achievement Criteria Data for Northcentral PhDMFT Program</th>
<th>Accredited: May 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advertised Program Length (6.2 years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Year Students Entered Program</th>
<th># of Students Enrolled in Program</th>
<th># of Active Students</th>
<th>Advertised Graduation Rate (%)</th>
<th>Maximum Graduation Rate (%)</th>
<th>Job Placement Rate (%)*</th>
<th>National Exam Pass Rate (%)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.5% (Advertised program length not yet reached)</td>
<td>12.5% (Maximum program length not yet reached)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Advertised program length not yet reached</td>
<td>Maximum program length not yet reached</td>
<td>Advertised program length not yet reached</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Advertised program length</th>
<th>Maximum program length</th>
<th>Advertised program length</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>not yet reached</td>
<td>not yet reached</td>
<td>not yet reached</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>not yet reached</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>not yet reached</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This is defined as the percentage of graduates from the cohort year listed who are employed within 3 years of their graduation utilizing skills learned in the COAMFTE accredited program.

** This is defined as the percentage of graduates and students from the cohort year who passed the state or national licensing exam for Marriage and Family Therapy, after having sat for the exam at least once.

Description of faculty
See the description of our faculty above on p. 7 and at this link. A list of faculty in the School of Social Behavioral Sciences is also available at this link.

Description of supervisors
When PhDMFT students are practicum and internship (APEC), they are supervised locally by AAMFT Approved Supervisors, AS supervisor candidates, and state-approved MFT supervisors employed in a range of contexts from hospitals to agencies to private practices. See the demographic of local supervisors at this link.

Description of students
Our students live in approximately 40 U.S. states and five countries outside of the US. Their demographic characteristics are summarized at this link.

Accreditation/approval status
The PhDMFT program received initial COAMFTE accreditation in May of 2015.

Academic calendar
Northcentral University doesn’t use a standard academic calendar. We are open 52 weeks a year. Students can begin a course on any Monday throughout the year. Hence, the only relevant calendar information lists the days the university is closed (click here).

Degree completion requirements
Program degree requirements are listed here in the NCU Catalog (the same information is provided for all eight specializations).

Tuition and fees
Information on NCU tuition and fees can be found on the NCU website and here in the university catalog.
Degree completion timelines
NCU allows 8 years to complete all doctoral programs that require more than 60 credit hours. Students who are unable to complete a degree program within the stated time limits are dismissed. If a student believes they have extenuating circumstances they may document the circumstances and send a request for consideration to their respective School Dean or designee. Exceptions to the policy are determined on a case-by-case basis and are granted only once.

Normal time to completion for this program is 66 months. Time to completion varies depending upon the pace in which a student completes courses and the number of transfer credits accepted. As most NCU students are working adults balancing educational, professional, and personal commitments, our academic and finance advisors will work with you to develop a program schedule that works best for your needs.

The normal time disclosed above reflects the experience of students who may have entered under different program requirements. In the quest for continuous improvement, academic leadership has revised the program to optimize curriculum and pace, facilitate student learning, and improve chances for success. Therefore, the program is now designed for students enrolling today to take advantage of these revised course structures, lengths, and schedules. New students following the preferred schedule designed by the Dean for this program, and applying no transfer credits, can expect to finish in as little as 56 months.

Percentage of students graduating within advertised and maximum timeframes
This information is included here (scroll down to COAMFTE Student Achievement Criteria Data for Northcentral PhD MFT Program) and above in the table above on pages 7-8.

Faculty roles in teaching, scholarship, and practice congruent with the program’s mission, goals, and outcomes
The faculty in the PhD MFT program are professionals who have been trained in systemic theory and practice. Currently, 100% of the faculty hold doctorate degrees with approximately 95% of those coming from COAMFTE accredited programs. All faculty are trained marriage and family therapists, currently 89% are licensed and clinically active as MFTs (either seeing clients or supervising students). All faculty teaching the practicum courses are AAMFT Approved Supervisors or Supervisor Candidates. As a group, the faculty have over 244 years of experience teaching in the field of family therapy with over 344 years of clinical experience. The faculty is made up of diverse professionals with a variety of cultural and professional backgrounds. The program is made up of full-time and part-time (adjunct) faculty, with the majority of students being taught by the full-time faculty. Faculty members’ involvement in teaching, scholarship, service and practice activities provides them with the knowledge and experience base to support students in developing relational/systemic innovations (SLO1), develop an area of specialization (SLO2), cultivate competence in working with diverse populations (SLO3), create knowledge through independent research (SLO4), and address relational/systemic ethical issues (SLO5).
Eligibility Criterion G: Establishment and Accessibility of Policies

Student Recruitment
The program has an intentional and comprehensive strategy to attract and retain a diverse student body and faculty, including instructors, supervisors, and professional staff. Due to the distance-based education structure, the program is accessible to students and faculty from diverse and marginalized backgrounds that may face challenges enrolling in an accredited MFT graduate program in a regionally accredited brick and mortar university. The recruitment strategy of the program entails a broad and diverse approach to marketing to attract potential students, staff, and faculty. We utilize the power of the Internet and social media to reach the most diverse population possible. Additionally, in the recruitment of potential students we use organizations that advertise to a wide variety of people and collect leads expressing interest in graduate studies. These leads are then purchased by NCU and the potential students are contacted to see if there is a fit between the goals of the applicant and the programs we offer. The Program Director and Department Leadership meet with the University marketing team on a monthly basis to review current social media adds, recruitment efforts, and the use of paid leads to ensure we diversify the type of information being shared and student populations being attracted. As part of this strategy the program has strived to offer diversity in curriculum, offering specializations in a variety of areas to attract a wider body of students, supervisors, and faculty. Faculty are recruited through traditional Internet-based websites (Higher Ed Jobs, Monster, AAMFT Job Connections, etc.) where we often purchase the “diversity package” to ensure the post are on specific websites that market to diverse populations of professionals. Reaching potential students, staff and faculty is facilitated by the many Internet-based resources that remove many of the barriers to searches that existed historically. In addition we receive referrals from our current full and part time faculty, students, and alumni which are spread across the national and many foreign counties, as well as our Professional Advisory Council members.

We also recruit potential students, staff and faculty at professional conferences (e.g., AAMFT Annual Conference, state MFT conferences) where we receive inquiries regarding our programs and employment with the University. The program works with each student to support their efforts to secure supervisors in the student’s local community ensuring that programs supervisors reflect the diversity we see in our student body. There are formal structures in place to not only attract but retain a diverse student body and faculty/staff. The department has a formal Diversity and Community Committee that meets regularly to explore initiatives to increase diversity in the program composition as well as increased understanding and respect for diversity within and outside of the program. The department also has a formal Retention Committee that meets regularly and provides regular reports to program leadership to monitor and develop initiatives to address the retention of the diverse student body within the program. Although the program continually strives to increase the diversity of the program, the current strategic efforts have successfully created a program rich in diversity in its current student body, faculty, and supervisors.

Anti-Discrimination Policy
The MFT Programs abide by the University's Non-Discrimination Policy, as found in the current Northcentral University Catalog. In addition, faculty are invested in the personal and professional
growth of students, and developing an understanding and appreciation for diversity is an important element of this growth. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, academic and professional background, race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationship status, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religion and spiritual beliefs and/or affiliation, national origin, veteran status, and belief systems. This policy applies to recruitment, admission, codes of conduct, hiring, retention or dismissal of faculty, student, and supervisor other educators.

Respect for diversity is embedded in the nature of the MFT Programs at Northcentral University, and the Programs are committed to acknowledging and discussing issues of diversity. Due to the online nature of the program, students and faculty members come from a wide variety of contexts. As such, the importance of diversity is seen in the actual diversity of our students, faculty, and supervisors, as well as being evident throughout our curriculum, clinical training, and our aspirational educational outcomes.

Admission Policy

Admission to the Northcentral PhDMFT program requires a conferred clinical master’s degree from a regionally accredited institution. In addition, a current resume or curriculum vita and a copy of degree transcripts are required. Additionally, PhDMFT applicants must participate in a one-on-one synchronous interview with current MFT faculty. Applicants will also complete an application packet that reviews the program requirements and expectations. The packet requires applicants to review the MFT Program website, the Northcentral University Catalog, regarding the requirements for pursuing licensure, and program/graduation requirements for MFT training.

Applicants, who are not yet licensed, are expected to compose a plan to obtain licensure, including exploring the requirements of finding a clinical practicum site and supervisor, as well as post-master’s degree requirements for licensure. Applicants are also required to respond to a series of questions referred to as a “Statement of Intent” so that MFT program faculty may evaluate the applicant’s interest in and readiness for the MFT program, as well as to see a brief sample of their writing. Applicants complete a Statement of Professional Ethics and Conduct, in which they are required to report any previous ethical and/or criminal behavior that may be relevant to training and practicing as a marriage and family therapist. Because state laws require licensed marriage and family therapists to be of good moral character, any prospective student who has been convicted of a felony prior to or subsequent to admission is required to immediately inform the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences of this conviction in order to determine the best course of action. In addition, a felony conviction may also disqualify a non-licensed student from some clinical internship placement sites, thereby making it likely the student will be unable to complete the requirements of the MFT degree programs. After submitting all required materials and completing a one-on-one interview with program faculty, the applicant will complete a background check prior to enrollment.

What follows is an outline of what to expect once the student is accepted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic and Finance Advisor (AFA)</td>
<td>Provides the student access to the NCUOne Course Room and works with the student to schedule courses for at least one year in the Course Scheduler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Stays in contact with her or his Academic and Finance Advisor (AFA) in order to adjust the timing of courses, ask questions, or request information or assistance regarding any matter related to the educational aspects of the program. The most common ways of maintaining contact are email, phone calls, or the University message system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Utilizes NCUOne as the primary means for completing coursework and degree requirements, serving as the gateway to courses, the NCU Bookstore, communication with faculty, staff, and other students, University resources such as the Northcentral Library, the Academic Success Center, the Commons, and the IT Help Desk. Using NCUOne, the student can review her or his degree plan, request/register for specific courses, manage educational finances, and setup or edit personal information found in NCUOne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Begins courses and also begins to submit assignments in a timely manner. No “bulk uploading” is accepted. The student must receive a grade on the current assignment before submitting the next assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Member</td>
<td>When assignments are completed and submitted for grading, the faculty member reviews, evaluates, offers detailed feedback, and submits the feedback and grades for students’ completed work. University requirements are such that faculty must respond to questions in messages or email within 24-48 hours and they must grade and submit detailed feedback for all work submitted within four calendar days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Takes advantage of this asynchronous model to work at his or her convenience, within allowable timeframes for course participation and faculty member responsiveness. Students are encouraged to also set time to talk via Zoom, Skype or phone during the first week of each course and, thereafter if additional mentoring or support is needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retention**

The PhDMFT program facilitates the success and retention of all students in ways that are consistent with the university mission and anti-discrimination policy, through faculty training, academic advising, and student support services. Program faculty meet weekly to discuss strategies to support at-risk students and those facing challenges in the program.
Graduation Policy
Upon completion of all program requirements, students will contact their Academic and Finance Advisor to begin the process of petitioning for graduation. To assure that all requirements of the program, degree, and specialization, as well as those of the University, are met prior to conferring the degree, a Graduation Audit will be performed in response to a student's Graduation Request.

The student submits the request to graduate electronically which sets an alarm for the Academic and Finance Advisor. The advisor then verifies that all general requirements have been met to earn the degree. An additional audit is performed by the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences to ensure that program specific requirements have been met.

For all students, degree requirements include:
- 3.0 (letter grade of "B") or higher GPA
- Official documents on file for basis of admission from an appropriately accredited academic institution
- Official transcripts on file for all transfer credit hours accepted by the University
- All financial obligations to the University paid in full

For doctoral students, degree requirements include:
- A minimum of 51 credit hours of graduate instruction must be completed through Northcentral
- Satisfactory completion of a Comprehensive Exam or Portfolio Process
- University Approval of Dissertation Manuscript and successful completion of the Oral Examination
- Submission of the approved final Dissertation Manuscript to the University, including the original unbound Dissertation Manuscript and an electronic copy

Program Specific Requirements include:
- Completion of all coursework
- Completion of all clinical training requirements

Once the Academic and Finance Advisor and Assistant Dean have approved the request, an alarm is set for the Accounting Department which then verifies that all fees are paid. When approved by Accounting, the Registrar receives an alarm to issue the diploma.

Complaints and Grievances

Complaint Procedure. Part of the process of becoming a professional is learning to deal appropriately with disagreements and grievances. Generally speaking, most concerns can be effectively addressed and resolved between the student and their faculty member. Engaging in a respectful interchange of ideas and concerns with peers and supervisors is an important part of a student's professional development. Learning to address concerns in a professional manner is an important graduate student skill.
If students experience a concern, either academic/clinical or administrative (e.g., university policy or procedures), they should follow the steps outlined in the table below. These steps are consistent with the levels of action described in the University Catalog. For academic concerns regarding grade appeals, students should contact their Academic & Financial Advisor or refer to the University Catalog for the current appeal process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Academic/Clinical Concerns</th>
<th>Administrative Concerns</th>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Faculty/Professor</td>
<td>Academic and Financial Advisor</td>
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<td>Level 2</td>
<td>MFT Program Director, when addressing concerns regarding clinical training first contact the Clinical Director (<a href="mailto:clinical@ncu.edu">clinical@ncu.edu</a>)</td>
<td>Associate Director Student and Financial Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>DMFS Department Chair,</td>
<td>Senior Director of Student and Financial Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>DMFS Assistant Dean of Students</td>
<td>Ombudsman or Office of Legal Affairs</td>
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<td>Level 5</td>
<td>SSBS Dean</td>
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**Remediation and Dismissal**

**Program probation & remediation**

Occasionally students experience difficulty in their graduate program that may lead to being placed on probation or other corrective actions. A student may be placed on program probation by the University or DMFS administrative faculty for unsatisfactory academic progress or for unsatisfactory performance in other training domains. These include, but are not limited to, practicum placements, internship placements, professional or ethical violations or concerns and/or other reasons identified by faculty.

A student placed on probation will, in consultation with the MFT faculty, develop a remediation plan (Guided Action Plan). Remediation plans are structured to assist students in working through whatever difficulties they are experiencing with the ultimate goal of achieving their professional goals. These plans will specify, in writing, the basis for the probation, the term of the probationary period, and the conditions which must be met in order to be removed from probationary status. Students placed on probation will remain on probation for a minimum of twelve weeks. Students placed on probation for unacceptable grades must successfully remediate the unacceptable grade and meet the requirements of their remediation plan, without incurring any additional complaints or problems, in order for probationary status to be removed. Removal from probation requires satisfactory progress of the remediation plan as determined by faculty consensus. Failure to meet the conditions of probation will result in dismissal from the program. If a student believes that the probationary status is not justified, or that the conditions of the probation are unreasonable, the
student may appeal in writing to the Chair of the Department of Marriage and Family Sciences within 10 working days. A student who has formerly been on probationary status may be terminated from the program for future inappropriate conduct or subsequent academic difficulties.

**Dismissal from the program**
A student's dismissal from the program may be a student decision or faculty decision. Students with a history of legal difficulties, or with legal charges or issues pending at the time of enrollment, are expected to make full disclosure of said charges during the enrollment and interview process. Failure to disclose information or students convicted of a felony during the program may be dismissed from the program. Students who violate the University’s Code of Conduct and/or Academic Integrity policy while enrolled in the program may be subject to immediate administrative dismissal. Students who have been dismissed due to a violation of the Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity policy, or due to any other legal or ethical matter, do not qualify for readmission to Northcentral University. Students in violation of the University’s Attendance policy may be withdrawn. Dismissal of students who fail to meet their financial obligations to the University is handled by the Accounting department. The Code of Conduct, Attendance policy, and a summary of the Academic Integrity policy are published in the Catalog. For additional information regarding Dismissal Policies students can reference the NCU Catalog: Academic Dismissal or Administrative Dismissal.

**Grading/Assessment**
Refer to the Grading Policies & Procedures section of the Northcentral University Catalog for information about the NCU Grading Policies.

**Codes of conduct**
Northcentral University has established a Code of Conduct for all students and faculty in the University community, including applicants, and alumni. Students in the PhD MFT program are expected to abide by this code at all times. This code can be found in Code of Conduct section of the Northcentral University Catalog. In addition MFT students and faculty are expected to follow the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Those found to have committed a violation or to have attempted to violate either of these Codes will be subject to disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the University.

**Portability of degree**
The PhD MFT degree is not designed to provide students with the coursework required to meet typical state educational requirements for licensure. However, students who are not yet licensed MFTs should determine what courses they lack for licensure and explore with their AFA and/or the Director of the MFT Doctoral Programs if these classes can be incorporated into their program of study at NCU.

In addition, two state regulatory boards do not accept degrees earned in an online environment as meeting the educational requirements for licensure. Other states may have requirements for specialized accreditations or other unique course/credit requirements above and beyond the
standard degree plan that would prevent clinical practice as a student and/or successful application for licensure. Although licensure laws are governed by individual states and can change frequently, the MFT program administration seeks to identify these states and notify applicants in those states with any known limitations. However, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all licensure requirements are met.

**Responsibilities**

Notification will be given to unlicensed applicants to NCU MFT doctoral programs who live in an identified state that may not currently accept Northcentral University’s (NCU) Marriage and Family Therapy degree for licensure.

**Scope of the Notification Process**

Because there are some states that have regulations that prohibit the use of a degree from the Northcentral University MFT Program as meeting licensure requirements, the MFT program administration will notify applicants who live in, or express interest in practicing within, one of those identified states.

**Continued Requirements after Admission**

Once enrolled, students are required to work with the state in which they wish to practice as a MFT to ensure that they are in compliance with all licensure requirements. The program will provide information when possible to support those efforts, but it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all licensure requirements are met. Completion of the program does not guarantee the opportunity to sit for licensure.

**Technology Requirements**

Students in an online program must have the technological resources necessary for them to be successful. Please click [here](#) for a discussion of the minimum technical requirements for NCU students.

**Academic Integrity (Authenticity of Student Work)**

Refer to the Academic Integrity section of the [Northcentral University Catalog](#) for information about Academic Integrity policies.

**Technical training for students, faculty, and supervisors**

**Students**

- **Learning Management System** - Students are required to participate in the “Walk to Class” with their Academic and Finance Advisor. Advisors will provide a personal one-on-one training in which they will show the new student how to use NCUOne, the University’s learning management system (LMS; online classroom). In addition, students are expected to review the asynchronous trainings on NCUOne provided by the NCU Center for Teaching and Learning (access within NCUOne or the Commons).
Video Conferencing - Currently, the MFT program uses an application called Zoom, which is a HIPAA compliant video conferencing tool. Students are required to participate in the orientation and training that will be provided during their first clinical course/practicum. In addition, students are required to review the audio and video sharing training resources for this tool.

Clinical Tracking Application - Currently, the MFT program uses an application called Tevera to track all clinical hours and supervision received during the practicum and internship courses. The application allows local supervisors to verify and sign off on client contact hours as well as the supervision hours received. Students will receive guidance and training with this application during their clinical courses with their assigned faculty. Online training from Tevera is also available at this link.

Faculty & Supervisors
Learning Management System - As part of the hiring process, faculty are required to complete the faculty training with NCUOne, the university’s LMS. The training is provided by the NCU Center for Teaching and Learning. As this training is continually updated, faculty will be enrolled in the most current version of the training during the hiring process.

Video Conferencing - Currently, the MFT program uses an application called Zoom, which is a HIPAA compliant video conferencing tool. Faculty will be trained how to use this tool when assigned to teach practicum and/or internship courses. Additional asynchronous training for this tool is provided at the following audio and video sharing training resources.

Clinical Tracking Application - The only technology local and faculty supervisors are required to use is Tevera. This site is used to track all clinical hours and allow local supervisors to sign off on client contact hours and supervision hours. Feedback from supervisors and student have indicated that the application is very user-friendly and intuitive to use. We share training resources like this with local supervisors to be familiar with the application. A member of the Clinical Team can provide additional training or orientation as needed.

Eligibility Criterion H: Diversity Program Composition

As noted above in the section on student recruitment, at Northcentral University we strive for a diverse student body, faculty, staff, and local supervisors (see pp. 11-12 above). Please click here for information on the diversity of program faculty, students, and local supervisors.

Eligibility Criterion I: Student Concerns, Complaints, and Grievances

Student Concerns, Complaints, and Grievances
The process students should following for addressing concerns, complaints, and grievances are addressed above on pp. 14-15, which also references relevant university policies in the University Catalog.
Additional Program Policies and Procedures

Various other program policies and procedures are listed alphabetically below.

**AAMFT Ethical Code Policy**
All faculty, local clinical supervisors, and students will conduct their practices and professional relationships in accordance with the most current edition of the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Care will be taken to "...do no harm" through treatment decisions, practice, and personal relationships. When practicing, supervising, or observing therapy, all students, faculty, and on-site supervisors must follow the [AAMFT Code of Ethics](#). These guidelines will be presented to students in various courses and places throughout the program. However, it is each student's responsibility to know the provisions of the code prior to conducting therapy sessions. Please read and follow ethical guidelines carefully. All students are strongly encouraged to schedule an appointment with the Director of Clinical Training to ask any questions regarding MFT ethics.

**Credit Hour Requirements**
The PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy degree requires a minimum of 63 credit hours at the graduate level beyond the master's degree. Northcentral University may accept a maximum of 12 semester credit hours in transfer toward the doctoral degree for graduate coursework completed toward a non-conferred doctoral degree at an accredited college or university with a grade of “B” or better. Transfer credit is only awarded for course work that is evaluated to be substantially equivalent in content to the required coursework for the MFT program.

**Liability Insurance**
When enrolled in Practicum or Internship, each student is required to obtain student level liability insurance. Students can buy this through CPH & Associates ([www.cphins.com](http://www.cphins.com)). AAMFT Student Members in good standing can receive free professional liability insurance through AAMFT. Students must have liability insurance before they can begin seeing clients.

**Marriage and Family Therapy Honor Society**
DELTA KAPPA, the International Marriage and Family Therapy Honor Society, has symbolic and historical significance within the field of marriage and family therapy. The purpose of Delta Kappa is to provide marriage and family therapy professionals an ongoing scholarly forum for the exchange of ideas related to the development of research, theory, and clinical practice. The Greek letters, Delta Kappa, have symbolic and historical significance within the field of marriage and family therapy. DELTA represents the triangle. The points of the triangle represent the three corners of the therapeutic relationship - the client/family present in the room, the therapists and therapeutic treatment team, and the external influences intertwined between lives of clients and professionals. KAPPA is the universal symbol for knowledge. The shape of the KAPPA symbol has a single long vertical line representing the intervention that occurs in the therapeutic process. The two lines meeting at the midpoint of the vertical line create a point of confluence with the therapist and the client system - joining together for change.
Northcentral’s SSBS hosts the Iota chapter of Delta Kappa. Student in the MFT doctoral programs can qualify for the honor society if they have a 3.75 cumulative GPA or higher and have completed 12 semester hours in the program. To apply students most complete the application form and submit a $75 one-time membership fee.

**Membership in Professional MFT Associations**

All students are encouraged to join the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapist (CAMFT), the International Family Therapy Association (IFTA) or other national professional association representing the profession of MFT in the student’s home country. Part of training to be a Marriage and Family Therapist is investing in one’s professional development. Being involved with relevant professional associations such as the AAMFT is an important part of the learning process and of establishing a professional identity as a MFT. Visit the sites for the [AAMFT](http://www.aamft.org), [CAMFT](http://www.camft.org), or [IFTA](http://www.ifta.org) and browse the resources that are available. Also, look into the requirements and benefits of joining. For example, among other things, AAMFT members receive copies of the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, six annual issues of *Family Therapy Magazine*, access to AAMFT Job Connection, free access to most of the resources that are available through *Family Therapy Resources* and a liability insurance policy is included with the student membership. MFT Students at Northcentral University normally qualify for the Student Membership (the exception to this is if you are already licensed as a MFT, which would then qualify you for a Clinical Membership).

**Notification to International Students**

While the field of marriage and family therapy is an increasingly international phenomenon, it continues to have strong historical and contextual roots in western cultures (e.g., the United States). Therefore, much of the practice, literature, and research in the field continues to be conducted in contexts common in western cultures. One of the benefits of online education is the expansion of the practice of marriage and family therapy into international contexts, thus expanding the field’s knowledge base and applicability. While all students are encouraged to read broadly in the professional literature, international students are specifically encouraged to seek out literature and experiences that will help them to practice ethically and sensitively in their local contexts. In addition, international students are strongly encouraged to work closely with their local supervisors to practice in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner that is appropriate to their local contexts.

**PhD Program Clinical Training**

The bulk of information on the clinical portion of the program is contained in the [Clinical & Advanced Practice Handbook: PhDMFT Program](#). However, a few issues are addressed below.

The PhDMFT programs is not designed to meet licensure requirements. However, the PhDMFT program requires students to show completion of the foundational curriculum, which is a key
component of licensure in most states. When needed, additional courses can be selected and added as specialization courses for licensure purposes. Students with questions about pursuing licensure should consult with NCU faculty about this matter by emailing clinical@ncu.edu.

Many of our doctoral students are already LMFTs or licensed in another mental health discipline. Other students have completed a master’s degree and are working on completing the post-degree experience for licensure. Whatever the specific situation, clinical training at the PhD level requires that the student grows both in skill competence and in theoretical analysis and synthesis. Students who are not LMFTs will be required to complete 800 hours of direct client contact, which includes conducting face-to-face therapy with individuals, couples, families, and groups. At least 400 hours of client contact must be relational (i.e., couple or family). In conjunction with client contact, doctoral students must receive a total of 160 hours of supervision. Supervision of students will occur at the rate of one (1) hour of supervision per every five hours of client contact and will be face-to-face or live supervision conducted by AAMFT Approved Supervisors, Supervisor Candidates, or equivalent state approved supervisors. In some cases, students may be required to pay for local clinical supervision. This will depend on the placement location, and/or the local supervisor they contract with. For more information, please read through the practicum and internship course descriptions. The decision to pay for local supervision is entirely up to the student and not a requirement of Northcentral University. Students who obtain their full license as an MFT will by default have met the requirement of 800 hours of client contact and the 160 hours of supervision. In addition all doctoral students are required to complete a 9 month Advanced Practical Experience Component (APEC; internship); see below for more information regarding the APEC.

**Supervision Coursework**

In addition to advanced coursework in marriage and family therapy, students must complete a course in MFT supervision methodology (this requirement can be satisfied by taking NCU’s supervision course or completing AAMFT’s online Fundamentals of Supervision course. The supervision course will be conducted in connection with the requirements established by AAMFT for students to become Approved Supervisors. Not all requirements will be completed for the students to achieve the designation while in the program at Northcentral University. For students in the MFT PhD program, the supervision coursework is pre-approved by the AAMFT to count for the 30-hour supervision course requirement. Students will have to complete the direct supervision and supervision mentoring requirements outside of the program in order to qualify for the Approved Supervisor designation.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is the standard by which Northcentral University measures students’ progress toward completion of a degree or certificate program. The three components of SAP are Grade Point Average (GPA), Course Completion Rate (pace), and Maximum Timeframe. If, at any time, a student is not meeting the minimum requirements for SAP, he/she receives an email notification in NCU Course Room as well as an email to the personal address on file. However, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to know these requirements, and failure to receive notification does not nullify the SAP status.
Additional information regarding the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy can be found in the Northcentral University Catalog.

**Student Support Services**
Northcentral University offers an array of student support services. Contact information for all student support services can be found in the current Northcentral University Catalog. You will also find links in NCUOne for key student services. Please consult the Northcentral University Catalog for specific information pertaining to the following services:

- Enrollment Services
- Office of the Registrar
- Academic and Finance Advising
- Disability/ADA Services
- Center for Teaching and Learning
- Academic Success Center
- The Commons
- NCU Library
- Alumni Services